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THE WEST MOURNS ONE OF ITS GREAT MEN--Frank Oliver.

A voice that for more than half a century has declared faith in the west, predicted its ultimate greatness and defended its people and their ambitions, has been stilled in the passing of Hon. Frank Oliver. This year would have seen his "diamond jubilee" as a pioneer of western Canada, for it was in 1873 that he arrived in Winnipeg from Ontario, a youth of 20, and there began that great career that made him one of the "fathers of Edmonton" and that took him to parliament and into the cabinet as a representative of this city and of all the west.

He was not in the original "cabinet of all the talents" which Sir Wilfrid Laurier formed in 1896--he was not a minister until 1905--but it was in 1896 that he entered the commons as an independent Liberal from the old "District of Alberta." Even that long ago he was an "old-timer," for he had been in Edmonton for 20 years, had represented the district in the old territorial council and later in the assembly at Regina. He founded the Edmonton Bulletin in 1880 and published it until 1923, a record in journalism seldom surpassed in the new world.

How interwoven was his life with the history of Edmonton was brought home to many when he opened Edmonton's jubilee fair a few years ago, for when the first Edmonton exhibition was held 50 years before, he wrote the account of it which appeared in the Battleford Herald. He told his audience at the jubilee fair that when he first came to Edmonton in 1876 "wheat flour was a luxury, not a necessity,

and sold at $15 to $25 per 96-pound sack when there was any for sale, which was only at intervals. Police horses at Fort Saskatchewan were fed on oats grown at Sun River, Montana, freighted across country by strong teams of mules, horses or oxen and Red River carts to Edmonton. The first night I slept in a house in this district," he recalled, "the owner and his wife sat down to a dinner of boiled muskrats and 'lady-finger' (small) potatoes--and were specially fortunate in having the potatoes. The staple food of the country was buffalo meat and whitefish. The nearest railhead was in the state of Minnesota, far beyond Winnipeg. Mail came once in three weeks and took three weeks on the way from Winnipeg."

It is impossible to measure the effect his abiding faith in the community and the country had upon the early settlers. His counsels must have done much to stem the near-panic that swept this part of the country when the C.P.R. altered its projected route in 1881 and left the Edmonton settlements 200 miles off the line. Again, in 1914, he refused to acknowledge defeat when the land boom burst and the war scattered newspaper revenues to the winds. His work in the territorial council and assembly and in the federal government intimately concerned the west, for in the former he was responsible for giving the territories their school and election laws and in the latter his duties as minister of the interior centred chiefly in the colonization of the prairies.

Those who knew him best loved him most. His chief

characteristic was his unswerving allegiance to principles of government and conduct in which he believed. His bitterest political enemies were those who he felt had been false to the party. He was never one to soften his avowal of a principle because it happend to be unpopular at the moment. Although he had lost a son in the war and was as eager as any to encompass the defeat of the enemy, he refused to countenance conscription because he felt it was an interference with the rights of the individual and contrary to Liberalism. His course was unpopular and he knew it but he held ot it in the khaki election and went down to defeat with his colors flying. He neither gave nor asked quarter in a fight whether it was in the municipal, provincial or federal field. His followers adored him for his very human qualities--his picturesque vocabulary, the strength of his convictions, his delight in a fight and, above all, his faithfulness to his friends.

He was a friend upon whom complete reliance could be placed under any and all circumstances. The west, the old west, knew this. He was equally faithful to the newer west, the west of today. He was convinced to the very end that in the development of the west lies the future of the dominion and in the very last year of his life, as he approached his 80th milestone, was especailly active in fighting sectionalism and in urging the east to give careful study to western problems, activities and objectives. He was faithful even unto death. The west has lost one of its great men and his passing will be mourned by thousands as that of a personal friend.

Oliver

EXCERPTS FROM ADDRESS GIVEN ON THE OCCASION OF THE OFFICIAL OPENING OF THE 50th ANNIVERSARY OF THE EDMONTON EXHIBITION, July 15th, 1929.

"I understand that I have been honored with the invitation to take part on this occasion because I am one of the very few still on the near-side of the Great Divide who were privileged to attend the first Edmonton Exhibition of 50 years ago. May I with all due modesty put forward an additional claim. If my memory does not betray me the report of this exhibition which appeared in the Battleford Herald was an early venture of mine in the field of journalism.

....."When I came in 1876 wheat flour was a luxury, not a necessity, and sold at $15 to $25 per 96 pound sack; when there was any for sale, which was only at intervals.

"Police horses at Fort Saskatchewan were fed on oats grown at Sun River, Montana, freighted across country by string teams of mules, horses or oxen to Calgary and then on Red River carts by ponies or oxen to Edmonton.

"The first night I slept in a house in this district the owner and his wife sat down to a dinner of boiled muskrats and "lady-finger" potatoes--and were specially fortunate in having the potatoes.

"The staple food of the country was buffalo meat and whitefish. The nearest rail head was in the state of Minnesota, far beyond Winnipeg. Mail came once in three weeks and took three weeks on the way from Winnipeg. Truly we were a people apart. But we were here as pioneers,

not as exiles. We had come to help ourselves. What helped the country helped us. Hence the first Edmonton Exhibition. May I say there were amongst us some real people.

"Bill Cust, California, Caribou and Peace River gold miner and fur trader, the first man to undertake farming in the district as a business enterprise. He brought a self-binder by steamer up the river from Winnipeg at the time wire was used for binding sheaves, before the cord binder was invented.

"Tom Smith, fur trader, formerly of of Fallowfield, near Ottawa, who hauled a steam thresher across the plains from Winnipeg by ox-team in a season when the trails were particularly bad.

"Lamoreux Brothers, who built and operated a grist mill on the Sturgeon River.

"Donald Ross, gold miner, from Ominica, who began market gardening on what afterwards became the Ross estate and who also developed coal mining as a side line and operated the only hotel west of Portage la Prairie.

"McLeod, Norris and Belcher, who built a steam saw and grist mill on the Riverdale, Flats and Hudson's Bay Company, who also built a steam flour mill near the Fort.

"There were many others. Everyone did his bit and was proud to do it. In helping himself he helped the country.

"These adventures in agriculture and allied enterprises in the later '70's and early '80's were in expectation of railway construction through the Jasper Pass, which meant railway facilities for the Edmonton district.

"In 1881 it was decided to switch the projected railway from the northern to the southern route, leaving the Edmonton settlements 200 miles off the line. The pioneers were licked; but they did not quit. They had faith in the country and confidence in themselves. They knew the railway had to come; but the could not tell when. They only could wait and hope. But while they waited, they worked.

"For 24 years hope was met by disappointment. These years of disappointment included the usual chances of frost and hail and drought and hard winters, with the Rebellion of 1885 thrown in for good measure. But is was during that quarter of a century that the work of the pioneers demonstrated the possibilities of the district.

"It was found that oats grew more bushels to the acre and more pounds to the bushel in this district than anywhere else in the world; with more than average assurance of success.

"It was found not only that Edmonton was well within the wheat belt but that wheat could be commercially grown hundreds of miles to the Northward and Westward. In 1886 the Lawrence Brothers began farming at Vermilion, on Peace River; as much further north from Edmonton as Edmonton is north of the international boundary. And wheat has been grown there successfully ever since. About the same time Rev. J. Gough Brick established the Shaftesbury Settlement near the present town of Peace River.

"Where only 'lady-fingers'--the smallest of small potatoes and a few in a hill--had been grown, potatoes averaged larger and yielded greater tonnage to the acre than anywhere else on the continent.

"The first swarm of tame bees in any part of the Canadian West was brought to Edmonton in 1888 by Thomas Henderson and Robert Knowles.

"In 1905 the Canadian Northern rails reached Edmonton on the direct line from Winnipeg. This was the beginning of the new era....."